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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
10 March 1982

The news—briefly

CIA charges Nicaraguan buildup

Washington.

US intelligence officials have accused Nicaragua of building a military force larger than that of all its neighbors combined, Monitor correspondent Daniel Southerland reports.

Such a force, they say, could not possibly be required for purely defensive purposes. They speculate that the buildup will be used much as Cuba used its own buildup: to export revolution to other countries.

In a State Department briefing March 9, Bobby Inman, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said the buildup was "vastly beyond any defensive need for Nicaragua."

Mr. Inman and other officials presented aerial photos of Nicaraguan garrisons, airfields, and military equipment, and said Nicaragua appeared to be training a regular army which could total up to 30,000 troops, as well as an additional military force of between 100,000 and 150,000 men.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. had promised last week to release detailed evidence of Nicaraguan support for the guerrillas in El Salvador. But the intelligence briefing March 9 failed inexplicably to provide such evidence. State Department officials had earlier explained that much of that material was of a sensitive nature and that its release might endanger intelligence sources.